

tion on polar bear habitat use in both countries, and a retrospective study of how the border between the two countries being opened for the past 10 years has affected people on both sides of the Strait.

For the past several years, the Park Service has also supported the translation into English of several Beringian-related Russian books of interest to the academic and general community, including works by regional archaeologists. In a related project, the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Native Language Institute has worked on a dictionary for the Naukan Eskimo language of Chukotka, Russia. Park Service funding has assisted the institute in gathering data from visiting Native speakers, and with the publishing of a dictionary. These and earlier projects related to Native place names provide for a more common understanding of the resources, improved communication among researchers and the dispersal of local knowledge.

In addition to published research and community projects, another technique used to increase cross-border awareness and appreciation for the unique natural and cultural values found in the region is the annual "Beringia Days" Conference held each autumn in Anchorage, Alaska. These meetings allow American and Russian

park managers, scientists, Native and non-government organisations, and the public to discuss topics of interest, present research papers, and to reiterate the benefits of an international park for Beringia. In 2001, several Russian specialists attended in addition to researchers, representatives of Alaska Native organisations and the general public.

Other Beringia programmes have emphasised the inclusion of local residents in the work. Golovin, a small village south of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, has hosted archaeological field schools for the last four years. The Golovin Village Corporation is an organisation started as part of the settlement of Alaska Native land claims, and

this project. Students maintain journals on natural and cultural observations and have developed web and graphics products based on the material written.

"The Beringia programme is an exceptional international example of what the National Park Service is doing more frequently around the country — work with universities, communities, native organisations and others in partnership to further our knowledge of the natural and cultural resources of a region," said Arnberger. "Whether or not there is ever a formal international park, the kind of relationships that have been built among the academic world, local residents and land managers is a wonderful accomplishment."



Map showing the land bridge which connected Chukotka and Alaska 12,000 years ago.

the local school gave students training in archaeology. In 2000, in addition to classroom training conducted by personnel from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the group assessed cultural sites on village corporation lands; six students and two adults from Russia participated. In 2001, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference assisted the Golovin Field School with a reciprocal student exchange with Provideniya, Russia.

In another project, the school district based in Kotzebue, Alaska, has adopted a new curriculum for writing based on



Russian children undertake an Inuit language programme at the Alaskan settlement of Savoonga.

Photo: NPS